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# The Modern Language Journal

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## A NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MODERN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

The arrangement between the Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations and the Association of Modern Language Teachers of the Central West and South, as a result of which the MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL came into being, terminates its first stage with the close of the present school year. THE JOURNAL has been editorially and financially successful beyond the hopes of the little group that gathered in Cleveland in December, 1915, and translated into reality its faith in the demand for a pedagogical journal of the modern languages. Not the least of the services of THE JOURNAL has been to bring together into working relations the representatives of the various associations of modern language teachers. New England and New York and Ohio and Illinois,—East and Middle West and South,—have learned to know something of each other in person, and have co-operated, not merely in the support of THE JOURNAL, but in a productive interchange of ideas, as at the "War Time Conference" at Pittsburgh last July. A valuable esprit de corps has thus begun to develop throughout the field of modern language teaching.

That this spirit must be made to grow has become clear to all of those who have seen the need of greater solidarity in our profession. It was an expression of this idea when the Western Association, at its meeting last May, passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a national federation in place of an extension of the Cleveland agreement. The resolution struck an immediate echo in the Federation, which appointed a committee of the presidents of its four constituent associations, with the

chairman of the Federation, to confer with the Western Association. As a result of conference and correspondence a draft of a constitution was made. This draft, having received the approval of the committee of the Western Association, was laid before the representatives of the Federation at their annual meeting at Hunter College, January 24, and was subjected to three hours' intensive examination and review. Some minor alterations were made, and the constitution was then approved, as below.

The first association to vote in favor of the new arrangement and tentatively adopt the constitution was the New Jersey Association at its meeting in Trenton, November 23. The Association of the Middle States and Maryland followed at Princeton November 20. The matter will come up for action by the New York, the New England and the Western Associations at their next meetings.

The drafters of the constitution do not feel that it is more than a working arrangement, which like other human instruments, must be hammered into shape by experience. A federation cannot arise over night, but must develop; and a written agreement can do little more than establish the first basis on which to build, through the growth of mutual confidence and the exercise of mutual helpfulness. The establishment of *THE JOURNAL* on a permanent basis will be in itself a great gain, for *THE JOURNAL* has long ceased to be an experiment and has become a necessary institution.

This will be one, but by no means the only gain from the proposed national federation. The setting up of a representative body for our entire country is an even more important matter. No group of teachers can less afford to be without such a central body than modern language teachers, whose temptations to separatism are always strong. With the development of a national committee, the work of the individual associations cannot but be strengthened and stimulated, while the interchange of fruitful ideas and the possibility of representing adequately the views and interests of modern language teachers of the entire nation through a central representative body must be of progressive benefit to our profession.

We are still in many ways a sectional people. As teachers, we are often too well satisfied to cultivate our own little garden

and we are apt to resent the suggestion that we can learn anything from outside. As modern language teachers we have another and special difficulty. We are apt to split into fractional groups, and are often determined to live and die as French or German or Spanish instructors. We forget that out of every hundred problems we have to face more than fifty are common to teachers of all the modern languages. At no time in the history of our country have such heavy responsibilities rested upon teachers of the modern languages, and at no time was the call for unity greater. In view of this, the organization of the national federation fulfills a patriotic duty.

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